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ABSTRACT

In 1987, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) adopted a faculty ethics statement developed by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) detailing faculty responsibilities to their disciplines, as teachers, as colleagues, and as members of academic institutions. To make the AAUP statement more relevant to community college faculty, the ASCCC has expanded upon the original document to focus on issues typically faced by community college faculty. The ASCCC statement expands the AAUP principles with respect to the following faculty responsibilities: (1) developing scholarly competence by pursuing professional development activities to keep abreast of their disciplines; (2) maintaining honest academic conduct and clearly communicating to students strict standards against cheating, copying, or other academic dishonesty; (3) insuring cultural and gender sensitivity and respecting students as individuals; (4) encouraging the free pursuit of learning by securing student access and success; (5) creating a learning environment of trust and sensitivity and avoiding exploitation of students in any guise; (6) establishing academic standards which realistically prepare students for work and citizenship; and (7) maintaining academic freedom and abiding by the obligations of that freedom, such as encouraging the free exchange of ideas and not using the classroom as a forum for expounding personal views. (KP)

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# FACULTY ETHICS: EXPANDING THE AAUP ETHICS STATEMENT

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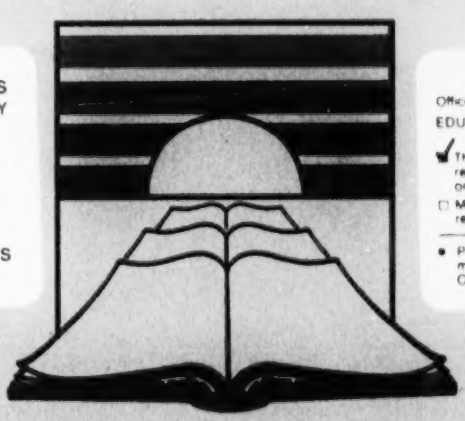

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*The Academic Senate*
*for*
*California Community Colleges*

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# ACADEMIC SENATE
# FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

## FACULTY ETHICS: EXPANDING THE AAUP ETHICS STATEMENT

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Academic Senate For California Community Colleges adopted the "American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Ethics Statement" in 1987 and in April 1988 released a paper entitled, "Why The Academic Senate Has Adopted The AAUP Ethics Statement." The AAUP statement and explanation for its adoption have been quite helpful to local senates in discussions of ethics. However, community college faculty face situations which are distinctly different from those faced by university professors. Furthermore, since the time the ethics statement was adopted by the Academic Senate, AB 1725 has become law, and the bill's redefinition of the community college faculty profession has resulted in an abundance of ethical questions regarding faculty roles, responsibilities, and obligations. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to offer expanded discussions on the AAUP Ethics Statement focussing on issues which typically face faculty in California's Community Colleges.

The AAUP ethics document consists of five statements outlining faculty responsibilities to their disciplines, students, colleagues, institutions, and communities. The text of these statements is included in Section II. of this paper. They serve as an excellent foundation in principles upon which decisions of ethical behavior can be based.

This paper expands those principles in the areas of scholarly competence, honest academic conduct of students, academic standards, cultural and gender sensitivity, the free pursuit of learning, avoiding exploitation of students, academic freedom, and contributing to the profession.

### II. AAUP ETHICS STATEMENT

Professors, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it. To this end professors devote their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence. They accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They practice intellectual honesty. Although professors may follow subsidiary interests, these interests must never seriously hamper or compromise their freedom of inquiry.

As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom.

As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas professors show due respect for the opinions of others. Professors acknowledge academic debt and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Professors accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution.

As members of an academic institution, professors seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars. Although professors observe the stated regulations of the institution, provided the regulations do not contravene academic freedom, they maintain their right to criticize and seek revision. Professors give due regard to their paramount responsibilities within their institutions in determining the amount and character of work done outside it. When considering the interruption or termination of their service, professors recognize the effect of their decision upon the program of the institution and give due notice of their intentions.

As members of their community, professors have the rights and obligations of other citizens. Professors measure the urgency of these obligations in the light of their responsibilities to their subject, to their students, to their profession, and to their institution. When they speak or act as private persons, they avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for their college or university. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, professors have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom.

## III. EXPANDING THE AAUP ETHICS STATEMENT

References in the following sections raise questions about how faculty interact with all members of the college community in carrying out their professional responsibilities and statements specific to students or colleagues should be interpreted as applying to other individuals.

### A. DEVELOPING SCHOLARLY COMPETENCE

Every discipline requires scholarship. Just as doctors are obligated to keep abreast of new developments in medicine and attorneys are required to know evolving laws, faculty must keep up with new developments in their disciplines and in teaching methods. It is a faculty member's obligation to pursue professional and academic development enabling them to infuse appropriate changes in curriculum as necessary.

In addition, faculty have academic freedom to pursue the truth. The intellectual virtues of being open-minded, fair, honest and objective in the consideration of differing views, being thorough in research, avoiding the manipulation of data, reaching a well-reasoned viewpoint, and the like, should all be fostered within the intellectual character of the faculty member.

These attitudes toward learning are precisely what faculty are trying to get their students to acquire, therefore, faculty are obligated to teach and lead by example. Modeling and teaching critical thinking and attempting to instill in students intellectual virtues which foster critical thinking is a key responsibility for faculty.

In other words, modeling a democratic style rather than an authoritarian one is more appropriate. Instead of trying to control the beliefs, opinions and values of our students, encouraging pluralistic dialogue is an ethical necessity. Teaching students, by the example of our classes, to respect differing views and how to benefit from the wisdom often found in ideas with which one disagrees can provide a profound learning experience for students.

### B. MAINTAINING HONEST ACADEMIC CONDUCT

Faculty have an obligation to ensure that students do their own work, that is, to prevent academic dishonesty. Types of dishonesty include copying from others, turning in work that is not the student's own, and using references without appropriate citation. Faculty must provide a definition of acceptable academic conduct on the first day of class through discussion and in writing. Furthermore, setting up testing situations that minimize the potential for misconduct is an essential strategy for preventing academic dishonesty.

Colleges should have a policy on honest academic conduct, developed by the Academic Senate. Faculty are obliged to make sure that such policies exist, are published, and provide appropriate due process standards. In addition, faculty need to openly express a zero tolerance policy toward academic dishonesty. Students who behave dishonestly should face retributive consequences consistent with the institution's policies.

Finally, there are rules and expectations of proper academic behavior that should be articulated and taught within the framework of the respective academic disciplines. Respect for students requires that all be held to the same standards of conduct. Holding students to different standards is demeaning and insulting.

C. INSURING CULTURAL AND GENDER SENSITIVITY: RESPECTING STUDENTS AS INDIVIDUALS

Respecting students as individuals is an ethical imperative for faculty. All students, as individuals, deserve the respect of faculty regardless of their cultural background, ethnicity, race, gender, religious beliefs, political ideologies, disability, sexual preference, age, or socioeconomic status.

One of the challenges of being an educator is to reach our students at their current point of understanding. When relating to students as individuals, faculty must recognize the unique circumstances of each student's life. In particular, some students may possess learning styles which hinder them from benefiting from traditional methods of instruction. Faculty have the responsibility to use all possible effective pedagogical tools to reach those students.

Students look to faculty as role models. Not only must faculty exhibit an appreciation and respect for students from all backgrounds, but it is also imperative that they teach and model behavior which is tolerant and shows appreciation and respect for others within their respective disciplines. Affirming individual students' abilities, strengthening their self identities, and assisting them to reach their full potential is a model worth emulating.

D. ENCOURAGING THE FREE PURSUIT OF LEARNING: SECURING STUDENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS

The concept of a community college as defined by the California Community Colleges' Master Plan is one of the best examples of an egalitarian educational system of higher education in the world. One could say that the idea of open access is the quintessential expression of democracy in education and that open access exemplifies the free pursuit of learning.

As participants in the development of educational policies at our institutions we must remain diligent to protect students' right to freely pursue their education, watching closely to prevent barriers to access, particularly to those from historically under-represented groups. These barriers may include restrictive or difficult to accomplish admission procedures, lack of access to counseling, unjustified prerequisites, and in other ways. Faculty may incorrectly assume that references, examples, or methodologies they use are part of the students' experience or cultural heritage. Methods should be sought which can make learning more achievable to students. Faculty have an ethical responsibility as educators to reduce as much as possible all barriers to the pursuit of education and to seek new methods to assure our students' success.

E. CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF TRUST AND SENSITIVITY

Exploitation of students by faculty members can take many guises. Be it for personal financial gain, sexual gratification, or any other reason, such exploitation is to be avoided at all costs. It is a fundamental ethical principle that individuals in power and authority should not use their advantaged position for their own gain or to advance their own self- interest. In light of the fact that the educational profession is one in which trust between faculty member and student best maximizes the results of the learning experience, it is especially reprehensible for faculty to use their power and authority for such self-gratification.

Faculty are in a power position and as such there is no greater violation of authority and power in higher education than when a faculty member exploits the power of this relationship with students. Students may have fears and insecurities about their abilities and what the future holds for them. They may tend to view faculty with a sense of awe that is based on a projected expectation rather than personal experience of proved expertise or trustworthiness. They tend to trust faculty beyond areas of academic expertise. To take advantage of individuals under these conditions is ethically inexcusable.

For example, in cases where some students are being evaluated on the basis of academic standards while others are being evaluated on the basis of responsiveness to inappropriate advances or where personal services or favors are traded for grades, privilege or recognition, one can easily see that such behavior is a violation of ethics. Students must be evaluated solely on the basis of academic standards.

Faculty must be cognizant of the possible perceptions and interpretations their students may formulate in response to faculty-student interactions. Therefore, the faculty member is obligated to create a learning environment free of insensitivity, hostility, and coercion. Faculty must realize that such an environment often can be more contingent upon the perceptions of students than on the intentions of faculty.

F. ESTABLISHING ACADEMIC STANDARDS

California Community Colleges have the dual mission of preparing individuals for work and citizenship. Successful careers depend on acquiring the skills, knowledge and abilities to perform competently in the work place. So, to prepare students for the world of work and to avoid misleading them as to what they can expect once they leave the campus, it is important to evaluate students in a manner which is consistent with the academic standards of the discipline.

Academic standards should be determined in the context of one's academic discipline by the community of scholars within the discipline. They should not differ significantly from one faculty member to another within the same discipline teaching the same or similar course(s). If, for example, there is significant variation in grading criteria and standards among faculty who teach courses that are prerequisites for courses further in a sequence, then clearly students, subsequent courses, and the disciplines, are harmed.

Additionally, the mastery that faculty have of their own discipline and scholarship entitles them to their classroom and the freedom of the presentation of their subject matter. However, it is unethical for a faculty member to persistently interject material unrelated to the course such that the instructor fails to offer the agreed upon subject matter of the course.

G. MAINTAINING ACADEMIC FREEDOM

By nature and definition, a college campus embraces the value of academic freedom. In order to pursue truth, survey the marketplace of ideas, and acquire knowledge and understanding, both faculty and students must have the freedom to express their views and be safe from reprisals. However, there are obligations which accompany academic freedom.

The first obligation in maintaining academic freedom is to create a learning environment in the classroom which fosters the free exchange of ideas. In other words, we should encourage the expression of diverse views and the understanding of those views. For example, if the instructor of a philosophy class only permitted the view of atheism to be expressed and did not allow the counter view of theism to be expressed, or the contrary, that instructor would be undermining academic freedom.

The second obligation which is required to maintain academic freedom is to clearly distinguish when one is speaking for oneself and when one is speaking as a representative of the educational institution. The classroom IN PARTICULAR should not be used as a forum for the advancement of personal causes. Our obligation is to inform, not to indoctrinate. If a stormy political issue arises, we can certainly encourage a lively discussion of all facets of the situation. However, we cannot present just our view or advocate only our own position unless we do so in the context of debate or other such pedagogical structures where opposing views may be presented.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Being a faculty member means being a colleague in a profession which involves participating in a profession where freedom of expression is of paramount importance to ensure the open exchange of ideas. Faculty are self-directed and, to a certain extent, determine the nature and quantity of their workload. Since tenured faculty have job security, the potential for individual tenured faculty having a less than conscientious work ethic is a possibility. It is important for faculty to maintain and strengthen standards of professionalism.

A recommendation on a framework and processes for developing local faculty professional expectations and accountability processes is currently under consideration by the Academic Senate's Educational Policies Committee.